

MEDIA RELEASE

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DIGITAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWERS A STEP CLOSER FOR NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's first remotely operated digital air traffic control tower is a step closer. Air navigation services provider Airways has awarded a contract to global technology provider Frequentis to develop a digital system for Invercargill Airport.

Airways is pursuing digital tower technology as a national alternative to conventional towers that will provide greater aviation safety, improved weather resiliency and the option to provide extended levels of services to New Zealand's regions.

"A digital tower at Invercargill Airport is the first step in our journey to modernise the way we provide air traffic services at airports," Airways General Manager of Air Traffic Services Tim Boyle says. "We're excited about the safety and efficiency advantages the technology offers to the airport, airlines, and ultimately travellers."

Airways and Frequentis will work in partnership to deploy the digital system in Invercargill. It is due to go live in 2020 and will be operated at first by controllers based at the airfield, before later moving to a centralised hub providing services to a number of regional locations.

Digital tower technology allows controllers to manage traffic from a remote location by replicating the view they would have from a conventional tower using high definition cameras and surveillance sensors.

An advanced set of tools including infrared camera equipment, object detection and tracking ability will provide vastly improved situational awareness, particularly in low light, or during adverse weather conditions. Augmented reality features allow live aircraft information, such as altitude and speed, to be overlaid on screens.

Digital air traffic control towers are being implemented at airports worldwide, with fully operational towers already in place in Europe. Frequentis is also deploying a solution for the US Department of Defence.

Frequentis Australasia Managing Director Martin Rampf says: “As the application of remote tower technology becomes more widespread, the safety and capacity benefits that controllers can obtain become clearer.

“We are absolutely delighted to have been selected by Airways New Zealand to implement the Frequentis smartVISION solution in Invercargill and very much look forward to supporting them in their goal to enhance their regional air traffic control services.”

Invercargill Airport General Manager Nigel Finnerty says: “As Southland’s gateway to the world, Invercargill Airport is a growing regional airport and we’re pleased to be leading the introduction of digital air traffic control into New Zealand.

“Digital towers will help to future-proof our airport operations, ensuring we’re able to safely and efficiently meet the ongoing needs of all those who fly here.”

Ends.

Notes to editors:

Digital air traffic services are Airways’ preferred option for replacing its existing network of aging towers in the future. We are working closely with our customers and our people to decide what the best fit for digital services will be for New Zealand.

Following Invercargill Airport, Airways plans to install a digital tower at Auckland International Airport in 2020. This will first be as a back-up system, and later as a full replacement for the existing tower.

Airways is looking to a number of intelligent transport technologies to modernise New Zealand’s air traffic network and meet the needs of an increasingly complex and busy airspace.

As well as digital air traffic control tower systems, these include:

- Development of an unmanned aerial vehicle traffic management (UTM) system and drone detection capability.
- Installation of the new Leidos Skyline-X air traffic management platform. This is due to go live in 2020 and replaces Airways’ two existing ATM platforms, installed between 2000 and 2003. The new Skyline-X platform includes a number of features to optimise the air traffic system.

- Introduction Automatic dependent surveillance – broadcast (ADS-B) as the main aircraft surveillance technology. This satellite supported tracking system will provide a much more detailed picture of airspace than is currently possible with radar.

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About Airways New Zealand

Airways is a world-leading commercial Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP). We look after key aviation infrastructure around New Zealand and manage the more than 1 million traffic movements per year into and around New Zealand's 30 million square kilometres of airspace.

Airways provides air traffic control and engineering training, and has delivered air traffic management, navigation services and consultancy in more than 65 countries.

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About FREQUENTIS

Frequentis is an international supplier of communication and information systems for control centres with safety-critical tasks. These control centre solutions are developed and distributed by Frequentis in the business segments Air Traffic Management (civil and military air traffic control, and air defence) and Public Safety & Transport (police, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, vessel traffic and railways). Frequentis maintains a worldwide network of subsidiaries and local representatives in more than fifty countries. The company's products and solutions are behind more than 25,000 operator positions in over 140 countries. With this extensive portfolio, Frequentis is the leading provider of voice communication systems... all making our world a safer place every day!

